

REMARKS

The present Amendment is in response to the Official Action mailed July 16, 2008. Claims 1-13 have been canceled herein, and claims 15 and 16 have been previously canceled. Therefore, claims 14 and 17-23 remain currently pending in the present case. The following sets forth Applicants' remarks pertaining to the currently pending claims and the outstanding Action.

As an initial matter, Applicants thank the Examiner for discussing the present matter on January 8, 2008. In that discussion, which was conducted subsequent to requests for interviews dating back to October 3, 2008, Applicants' options as to how to proceed in light of the Final Action and the fact that the present case included allowable subject matter were discussed. Ultimately, Applicants have decided to proceed with the acceptance of certain of the noted allowable subject matter, namely, Applicants have decided to accept allowable independent claims 14 and 20 and their respective dependent claims 17, 18, and 21-23. Applicants note here that claims 21-23 are incorrectly listed as being rejected on the Summary page of the Action, and never formally rejected in the remainder of the Action. Because they properly depend from allowable independent claim 20, or an intervening claim, such claims should also be allowable.

Per the Examiner suggestions, the present Amendment is being submitted along with a Notice of Appeal. However, Applicants firmly believe that given the current Examiner's indications as to the allowable nature of each of the currently pending claims (as well as the previous Examiner's indications regarding same), no appeal will be necessary. Instead, Applicants respectfully request that the present case be moved into a condition of allowance without the need for a full appeal. Applicants have canceled certain claims in the hopes of

expediting allowance of the present matter, and remain of the opinion that certain or all of such canceled claims are patentable over the prior art of record. Therefore, Applicants reserve the right to pursue any non-elected subject matter in one or more divisional and/or continuation applications relating to the present case.

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that he telephone Applicants' attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which he might have.

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

Dated: January 14, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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